



April 2004

Dear friend,

I am writing this – my last letter to you – with mixed emotions.

As you probably know, I will not be seeking re-election to the House of Representatives this fall. But the six years I served as your legislator are filled with fond memories. It has been an honor and privilege to serve the people of the 1st Legislative District and I am truly grateful to you for allowing me to represent your views in our state's capital.

Our state has undergone quite a lot since I joined the Legislature in January, 1999. Just think about it: we entered the New Millennium (without the Y2K bug biting us), we endured a major drought, the energy crisis, several floods, and the Nisqually earthquake that knocked the Legislature out of the Capitol building. Our state – and our nation – lost some of its innocence and a lot of its sense of security when terrorists attacked us, and the resulting loss of aerospace jobs continues to be felt in our district.

But there were some very proud moments during that time. The strength and resilience of our residents never ceases to amaze me. We stood together in the worst of times, never minding political parties or opinions.

That is the same philosophy I tried to use as a legislator — I worked with members from both parties to pass laws of importance to you. These are just a few:

- **CHIP.** When I came to Olympia, Washington was only one of a handful of states that had not established a state Children's Health Insurance Program. The program allowed us to access \$2 in federal money for each \$1 of state money spent providing low-income children. Getting Washington into the CHIP program was the first bill I passed as a legislator, and tens of thousands of children have medical coverage as a result.

- **The Patients' Bill of Rights.** Making sure people have access to health care is my passion. But having access should not mean giving up the right to know what your health care options are, your right to privacy, or your right to choose your medical provider. Washington State was one of the first to pass the Patients' Bill of Rights. I was a sponsor of that bill.

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• **Bothell Campus.** I began working to establish a University of Washington campus in Bothell when I was still a city council member. As a legislator, I continued to work with city, state, and university officials to make that dream a reality. The Bothell UW campus and Cascadia Community College have increased access to the world of higher education for thousands of our state's residents.

The legislative committees on which I served reflected my work life: health care, local government, and transportation. However, if I could have chosen one more committee it would have been education. Five of my children and grandchildren are educators, and I firmly believe that education is the key to our future. Many of the challenges we face – as a state and as a nation – can be solved with more focus on education.

For more than forty years I have made my home in this district. I raised my son and my three daughters here. Having the opportunity to serve you – as a reporter, a hospital administrator, a city council member, and a state representative – has had a profound effect on my life.

I believe passionately in the ability of ordinary citizens to make a difference and I believe firmly that the purpose of government is to serve the needs of the people. Throughout the years, I have had the privilege of seeing firsthand how our democratic process works. With your help, and your much appreciated support, we've made a difference.

Now, it's time for someone else to serve. Good people have always represented this district, I have no doubt a capable person will step forward.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jeanne A. Edwards". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Jeanne Edwards
State Representative